



WORK IMMERSION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021



Governor's Workforce Board
RHODE ISLAND
train for success · connect for growth

Governor's Workforce Board RI

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An equal opportunity employer program. Auxiliary aids and devices are available upon request to individuals with disabilities



OVERVIEW

Work Immersion is designed to boost the employment prospects of new and returning workers while opening hiring channels and reducing hiring risk for employers.

Paid work experiences such as those provided through the work immersion program help avoid gaps in work history and provide the opportunity for either immediate employment, or valuable experience that can keep a job seeker's resume "fresh."

The intent of this program is to help students and unemployed adults gain the work experience necessary to obtain gainful and fulltime employment.

STATUTORY CITATION

The Work Immersion program has been established pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 42-102-11.

KEY TERMS

For the purposes of this Grant Program the following terms apply.

Employer

An entity, company or organization entering into the contract agreement with the Governor's Workforce Board and providing the work experience and paying wages to the Employee. For the purposes of payment by the State of Rhode Island, the Employer may also be referred to as the approved RI state supplier.

Employee

An individual – Career and Technical High School student, College student or unemployed adult - that is hired by the Employer and named in the application and contract to participate in the Work Immersion experience. The employee cannot be a subcontractor or hired under 1099. The employee cannot be a family member or otherwise related-to the employer.

NOTE: Due to state funding limitations, the GWB is only able to make the program available for a limited time. Hires occurring before or after the April 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021 window are not eligible for the program. We apologize for the inconvenience and hope that the program can make a full return in the future.



EMPLOYER ELIGIBILITY

Employers must meet three (3) eligibility requirements:

- Classified as a for-profit, not-for-profit or public-sector entity doing business in RI;
- In good standing with the State of Rhode Island Division of Taxation; and
- An approved supplier that is registered in the Ocean State Procures system ('OSP'). If the business is NOT currently registered with OSP, the employer must register before applying for Work Immersion.

NOTE: Ocean State Procures is a NEW supplier management system. Accounts did not automatically transfer from the previous RIFANS system so applicants must register with Ocean State Procures even if they had a previous RIFANS registration.

Grant applicants must complete the state supplier requirement prior to applying for funding.

Please [click here](#) to be directed to the OSP application.

For questions regarding OSP please contact WebProcure.Support@perfect.com or call (401) 574-8100.

The employer may also visit the State of RI Division of Purchasing's website.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. The employee must be a new hire. Current employees or Contracted/1099 employees are not eligible.
2. The work experience must provide between a minimum of **80** to a maximum of **400** total hours. The contract and work experience cannot extend beyond June 30, 2021.
3. Individual employers are limited to no more than five (5) Work Immersion employees during the limited availability period: April 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021.
4. Wage Reimbursement Rates: 35% for hourly wages from the state minimum up to \$14.08 and 50% for hourly wages ranging from \$14.09 to 20.00.
5. The work experience must be meaningful and impact the participant such that they gain skills or experience that will further their career.



WORK EXPERIENCES

Meaningful Learning Opportunity

All work experiences should provide a meaningful learning opportunity, defined as a work experience which is:

- **Rigorous** allows the Employee to gain and/or improve upon their technical and professional skills and demonstrate mastery of those skills
- **Relevant** connects to the Employee's interests and to the real world of work
- **Reflective** engages the Employee in meaningful evaluations from supervisors and industry professionals
- **Interactive** provides multiple and extended opportunities for employees to interact with and learn from industry professionals
- **Integrated** in the case of a student Employee only, relates to the student's field of study

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

Unemployed Adults

To be eligible for work immersion as an **unemployed adult**, an individual must be:

- Rhode Island resident;
- At least 18 years of age; and either
- Unemployed (either collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits OR
- Not receiving wages prior to applying to participate in the Work Immersion Program

Students¹

To be eligible for work immersion as a **high school CTE student**, an individual must be:

- Rhode Island resident;
- Attend (or have graduated within the previous six months) a RIDE-approved CTE program which is aligned to a GWB priority industry;
- At least in their Junior year of high school

To be eligible for work immersion as a **college student**, an individual must:

- Be a Rhode Island resident; or
- A non-resident attending a Rhode Island based college or university; or
- Have graduated a Rhode Island college or university within the past six (6) months

New Hires

For the purposes of this program, a new hire is defined as an employee with a hire date on or after April 1, 2021 and with whom the company has had no prior employee relationship. Please note: The Governor's Workforce Board shall not provide reimbursement for any time worked prior to the start of the contract.

When submitting for reimbursement, if paystubs or timecards show that an employee has worked with the company for more than 28 days, the contract shall be considered null and void.

¹ All students must be of legal age and legally authorized to work in the State of Rhode Island. Please see the RI Child Labor requirements, should the employer have any questions.



APPLICATION PROCESS

Before a work experience can begin, an application must be submitted and approved by GWB staff. Work Immersion applications are available online at <http://www.gwb.ri.gov> and are received on rolling basis.

Applications will only be accepted between 9:00am on April 19, 2021 through 4:00pm on May 28, 2021.

Assuming accurate and complete submissions, applications are typically processed within seven (7) days of receipt of application. Once an application is approved, the employer will receive a Notice of Contract. While employment may start at any date after an application is submitted, the GWB cannot reimburse for wages earned prior to the start date of the contract.

Applications may be completed directly by employers and are accepted online ONLY. Paper based applications will no longer be accepted.

Each submission is initially reviewed by GWB staff to ensure all sections of the application are complete. Applications are reviewed for appropriate wages to be paid to the Employee, total hours requested and start and end dates of the work experience.

If any issues are identified in the application, the point of contact listed on the application form will receive a letter outlining the items required for approval. The employer must re-apply with the corrections.

By completing an application, the employer is agreeing to the terms and conditions set forth in this document and the work immersion application.

KEEP THE RECEIPT!

When an application has been submitted, the employer will receive an email confirmation that the application has been sent to the Governor's Workforce Board. This is the employer's receipt and counts as proof that the application was successfully submitted. If the employer does not receive this email confirmation, please contact the GWB within 48 hours for assistance.

Employers should hold onto this receipt throughout the duration of the contract in case an issue should arise. If this receipt cannot be provided by the employer, the GWB cannot verify the application has been received.

AWARD PROCESS

Once an application is approved, the applicant will receive the Notice of Contract via email.

A signed application from the Employer or Grantee and a signed Notice of Contract from the GWB, enters the parties into a contractual agreement.

PAYMENT AND REPORTING

All payments in the Work Immersion program are made on a cost reimbursement basis in which the employer pays the Employee's wages up front and requests reimbursement at the conclusion of the contract. At the conclusion of the contract, the employer is required to submit the Work Immersion Request for Reimbursement Form and appropriate wage records to the GWB at dlt.gwbinfo@dlt.ri.gov within 60 days of the contract end date.

If documentation is not received within the 60 days, the reimbursement will not be processed, and the contract will be terminated or closed.

NOTE: The employer may retain the Employee for as long as they like; however, reimbursement is paid for hours and wages worked during the contract period ONLY.

APPEALS

1. All appeals must be filed within two weeks (10 business days) of initial notification of determination a. The appeal should be addressed to the Executive Director – Governor's Workforce Board and should be emailed to dlt.gwbinfo@dlt.ri.gov or mailed to the Governor's Workforce Board at 1511 Pontiac avenue, Cranston, RI 02920. Building 72-2
2. The appeal must include the following information:
 - a. Your name, your employer name, address, and contact telephone number
 - b. A description of the issue

The Executive Director will issue a decision within two weeks (10 business days) of the filing of the appeal. The decision of the Executive Director is final.



ELIGIBLE HOURS

The Governor's Workforce Board only reimburses for work hours classified as "regular" hours worked. Overtime hours will be counted as regular hours and paid at the contracted rate of pay.

The GWB does NOT reimburse for:

- Holiday pay if the company is closed
- Holiday pay that the Employee worked will be reimbursed at the contracted rate of pay, not time and a half.
- Worker's Comp Hours
- Family and Medical Leave Act hours
- Vacation time hours
- Sick time hours
- Any other classification other than regular hours

REIMBURSEMENT

Two items are required to request reimbursement:

1. The Work Immersion Request for Reimbursement Form

When the employer receives their Award Letter, they will also receive a Work Immersion Request for Reimbursement Form. The form includes final participant information, the number of hours worked during the contract period and the Employee's Social Security number.

- Social Security numbers are collected at the conclusion of the contract period during the reimbursement process to ensure security and confidentiality
- Social Security numbers are required to confirm Employee's pre- and post- work experience employment and wages

2. Verification of Wages – Time and Pay Records

There are two (2) forms of acceptable wage records:

- The Employee's paystubs for each week they worked within the contract; or
- The Employee's timecards AND canceled/processed checks that verify the Employee was paid.

NOTE: Year to date pay roll records are not accepted.

Wage documents must identify:

- The Employee's first and last name
- The dates of the pay period
- The hourly rate of pay
- The number of hours worked within the pay period

If any of the above items are not present or incorrect, the Governor's Workforce Board will deny the request for payment and outline the reason for denial. The Employer will have ten (10) business days to correct the issue and return the complete information.

Reduction of Contract Obligation the Grantor, GWB, reserves the right to reduce the obligation amount under this contract if the expenditure of funds by the Employer, Grant Recipient, for eligible activities is at such a rate as to likely result in a surplus as the termination of the contract.

CHECKING REIMBURSEMENT STATUS

Payments will be issued within 30 days of receipt of adequate evidence of wages paid. Employers may check [RIPAY](#) for payment information. As a RI State supplier, employers may look up payments submitted to their organization by conducting a vendor search or check number search if they would like to inquire what the payment amount of a check included.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

GWB Staff is available to provide technical assistance throughout the process from the application stage through final reporting. Workforce network partners such as Adult Education providers, nonprofits, and American Job Centers may, and are encouraged to, promote Work Immersion to help place job seekers into positions and may assist businesses in the application process.



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